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NEW ACCESSIONS IN THE CLASSICAL DEPARTMENT

I. MARBLES



FIG 2. TOP OF A GREEK GRAVESTONE

THE Museum has recently received its second annual consignment of original works of Greek and Roman art purchased for it in Europe, and these are now exhibited temporarily in Gallery No. 8 on the ground floor, where for the time the entire room has been devoted exclusively to them. The members and other friends of the Museum are urgently recommended to see them while they are thus displayed, as what has been accomplished towards the development of this branch of our collections during the past twelve months can be much better appreciated now than when the objects are distributed among the various rooms and cases to which they severally belong, as they must be in the course of a few weeks, the space where they are at present shown being needed for other purposes.

The consignment consists of one hundred and twenty-seven objects, of which eleven are marbles (including one given by Mr. John Marshall), forty-five vases,

twenty-seven bronzes, thirty-one terracotta statuettes and thirteen of a miscellaneous character, such as gems, jewelry, etc. In answer to inquiries it may be stated that these were not purchased as a collection, but have been acquired at various places and of various dealers during the past twelve months. All of them have been selected in line with the policy, announced in the Bulletin of January, 1907, of building up the classical collection of the Museum with first-rate examples of the different branches of Greek, Roman and Etruscan art, and thereby raising its standard in proportion as its size is increased. In this respect we may congratulate ourselves that the year has been a decidedly successful one. The range and variety of the objects now displayed are so great, and many of the individual specimens are of such importance, that it would be impossible to do justice to them all in a single article. They will therefore be dealt with serially in forthcoming numbers of the Bulletin, and the present article will be confined to an account of the marbles.

Taking these in their chronological order, the first is the small Archaic Statue of a Woman which is reproduced from three points of view in fig. 3. Of this only the feet and small portions of the arms are missing, and in its present condition its height is 2 feet $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches (.698 m.). When found it was in four pieces, the body having been broken in two, the head—which was of a separate piece, inserted—had come off, and so had the left arm, which was also of a separate piece, attached by rivets. Those who are familiar with archaic Greek sculpture will notice that there is a discrepancy in style between the head and the figure, the former not appearing so genuinely archaic as the latter, either in treatment or in the type of the headdress. The significance of this discrepancy is so characteristically described in a letter from the late Professor Furtwängler to the Assistant Director of the Museum, written when the statue was first offered to us, that a translation of the letter will be of especial interest now:

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

PRICE TEN CENTS

BULLETIN OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

VOLUME III

NEW YORK, JANUARY, 1908

NUMBER I



FIG. I. GREEK RELIEF. YOUNG HORSEMAN

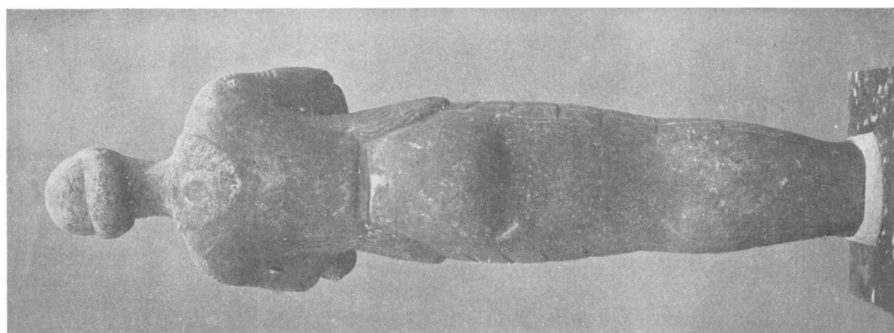
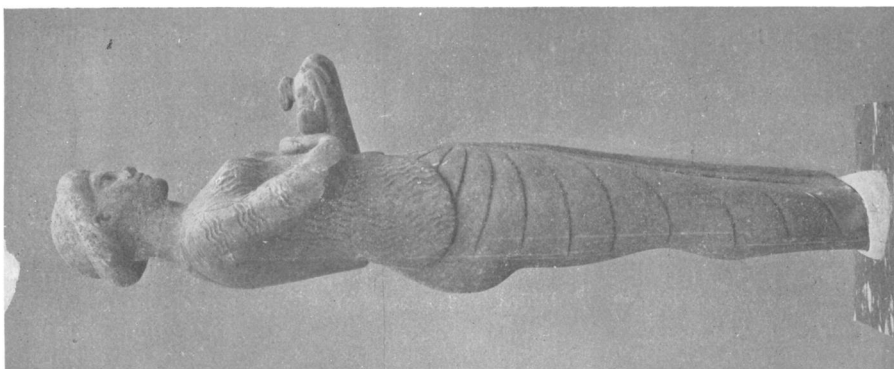


FIG. 3. ARCHAIC GREEK STATUE OF A WOMAN (FROM THREE POINTS OF VIEW)

"Large photographs have been sent to me of an archaic marble statue from Rhamnus,* showing it from all sides. I

cient restoration. That the whole statue is ancient, and that the parts belong together, there is, in my opinion, not the

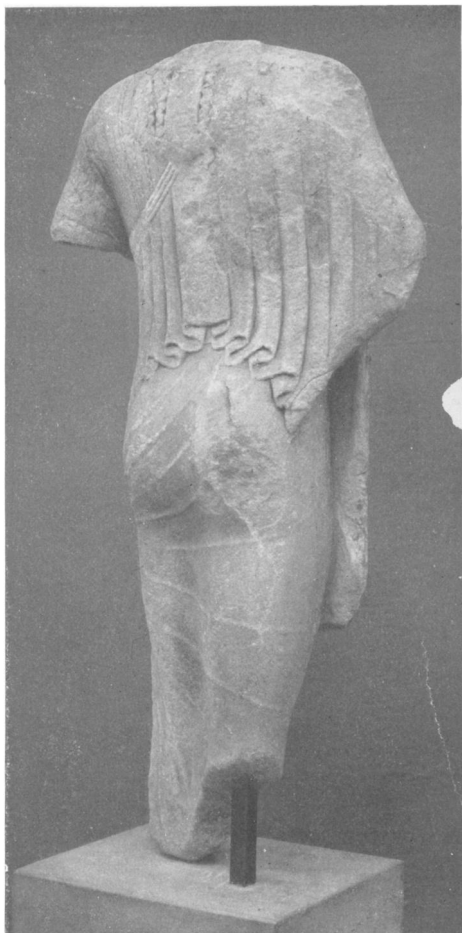


FIG. 4. ARCHAIC GREEK STATUE (FRONT AND BACK)

am asked to give you my opinion of it, and do so with pleasure, as it is really a very exceptional piece. The photograph taken from behind shows, in fact, that the figure had originally another head, with hair hanging down the back, and therefore the present head is an an-

*Since the above letter was written it has been ascertained that the statue was not found at Rhamnus, but probably in the neighborhood of Laurion.

slightest possibility of doubt. The modelling of the head is soft and not genuinely archaic, yet it does not belong among the common archaistic works of later times. The body is an absolutely pure work of the archaic style, without the least admixture of later elements. The motive of the figure is not an ordinary one; it is wholly different from that of the Attic 'maidens,' and finds close analogy only in early Ionic works. The recent

Berlin excavations at Miletos have brought to light two torsis with the same arrangement of the drapery, but these have not yet been published.

"The statue is therefore archaic; it was damaged, and was supplied with a new head and left arm during the best Greek period. . . Hence it is an entirely unique piece, and I should congratulate the Metropolitan Museum on its acquisition."

The figure itself dates from the second half of the sixth century B. C., while the present head and left arm—if the latter is, as Professor Furtwängler thought, a later addition—were probably added in the second half of the fifth or early part of the fourth century. The statue was doubtless erected as a votive offering in some sanctuary, and represented a young woman bringing offerings to a divinity.

Slightly later in date, though probably also of the sixth century, is the fragmentary Statue of a Woman (fig. 4), which comes as a gift from Mr. John Marshall, but is included here because it was received with the other objects. This is of life-size, its height being 3 feet 5¼ inches (1.055 m.). It was found in the island of Paros, and is probably the product of an Ionic school, the works of which were the inspiration of the famous "maidens" of the Akropolis.* Though but

a fragment it is of great value to our collection for the admirable manner in which it illustrates those qualities which give archaic Greek sculpture an interest beyond the primitive works of any other people, namely, the sculptors' appreciation, long before they were able to express it adequately, of the value of drapery in giving to a figure grace, beauty, and character; and also of the importance of having the figure felt through the drapery, that is, of representing it as carrying the drapery easily and lightly, not appearing to be held up by it. One has only to compare a statue like this with the older draped figures from Assyria and Egypt, which were their only

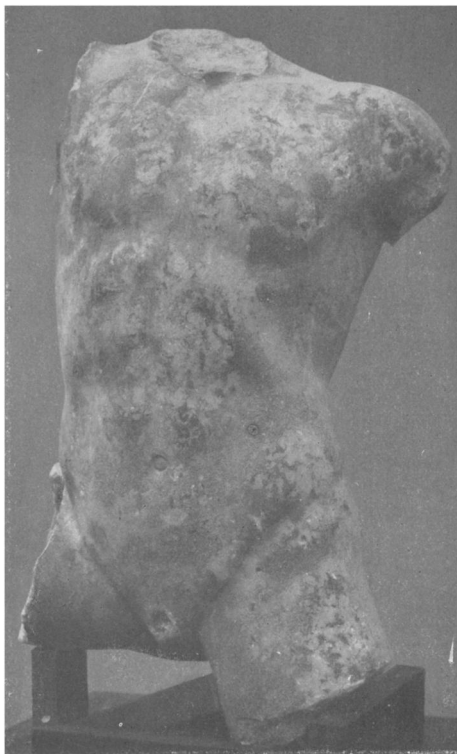


FIG. 5. TORSO OF A BOY—GREEK

models in art, to realize what a difficult problem the early Greek sculptors set themselves, and with what earnestness and fine instinct they worked to solve it.

The next number, the Torso of a Boy (fig. 5), carries us to the highest period of Greek sculpture. This is a fragment which will appeal especially to artists for the large yet subtle manner in which it is modeled, while to students of Greek art it will be useful as showing in an original work, even though it be on a small scale, the qualities which characterize the sculpture of the age of Pheidias; for there can be little doubt that it is an original of the Pheidian school, executed when that was still wholly under the influence of the master, and hence prob-

*A brief account of it is published by E. Loewy, in the *Archäologisch-Epigraphische Mitteilungen aus Oesterreich*, 1887, p. 159, fig. 13 and pl. VI, 1.

ably not later than the end of the fifth century B. C. As at present set up, the height of the fragment is one foot 9½ inches (.545 m.), but originally the body must have been inclined much more to the spectator's left, as the break at the right hip shows that the thigh was extended at right angles with the body, which with the present arrangement would leave the foot well in the air. All the breaks show that the figure was represented in intense action, with the arms extended and the head turned back.

Another original of the same school and period is the fragmentary Grave Stele of a Lady which in the pose and general character of the surviving figure recalls the well-known gravestone of Hegeso in the Dipylon cemetery at Athens. Even the loss of the head, though a misfortune, is not wholly without its compensation, as in its absence we can still see, and perhaps even more effectively, how independent the Greek artists were of the face, in making their figures express the characteristics and emotions which they wished to impart. Dignity, serenity, resignation, the tranquil spirit in which the Greek sculptors always conceived of the final parting, are all manifested here as impressively as though the marble were intact, both in the pose of the figure, and in the simple, graceful lines in which the drapery is arranged. The width of the fragment is 2 feet 4 inches (.71 m.) and its height 2 feet 10¼ inches (.37 m.)

Next is another work of a sepulchral character, though architectural rather than sepulchral. This is the Top of a Grave Stele (fig. 2), of large size, measuring 2 feet 10½ inches (.875 m.) in height, and remarkably well preserved, the surface retaining all the crispness and vitality of the original carving.

It consists of the familiar design of an anthemion springing from a bed of *akanthos* leaves, with a flower in the middle at the top. The stem of the flower does not appear in the relief, and was probably represented in color only, partially filling the interval between the two halves of the anthemion. Judging from analogies we may presume this ornament to have been affixed to the top of a flat, plain shaft, at least eight or ten feet high, on which the names of one or more deceased members of a family were en-

graved. It is Attic and its probable date is the early part of the fourth century B. C.

The small Relief of a Young Horseman (fig. 1) is the most exquisite of all the marbles in this collection, and one may safely prophesy that it will be regarded as one of the great treasures of the Classical Department. It is indeed a little masterpiece, of marvelous perfection in all the details both of composition and modelling, and alive with the spirit of the best Greek sculpture. The fine breeding and nervous action of the horse, and the splendid proportions and firm, easy seat of the rider are comparable even with the horsemen of the Parthenon. Were we to judge by the animal alone,

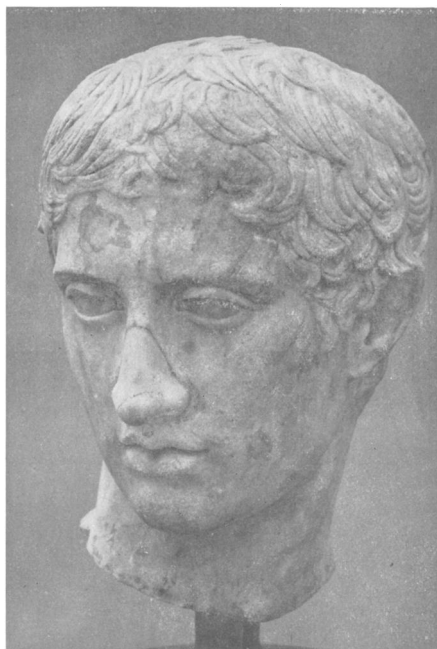


FIG. 7. POLYKLEITAN HEAD

this relief might be referred to the same time and school, but the tendency towards elaboration rather than simplicity in the modelling of the youth's figure, and the individuality in the representation of the face, are indications of a later period, probably not earlier than the second half of the fourth century. By way of explanation of the subject there is little to be said, as it tells for itself what story there is to tell. The left side of the slab is broken off, and it is impossible to determine just how much more there may have been here; but as the design appears to be complete on the other side, and as there is no suggestion of a second figure either in the action of the rider or in any part of the slab, it is probable that this was not part of a frieze, but simply a votive relief, almost complete as we have it, dedicated perhaps by a victor in a horse-race. It is said to have been found in one of the Greek islands. Height 1 foot 6 inches (.458 m.); width at bottom 1 foot (.305 m.).

Of the Roman period there are two characteristic portraits—one a fine fragment, including the face, of a colossal head of Augustus, representing him as somewhat younger than the famous statue in the Vatican. Lack of space prevents its being illustrated in the present Bulletin, though it may be later. The other is a

small head; height from the chin to the line of the hair $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches (.165 m.), subject unknown, which displays in a characteristic manner the genius for portraying individuality, for representing their sitter precisely as he was, that

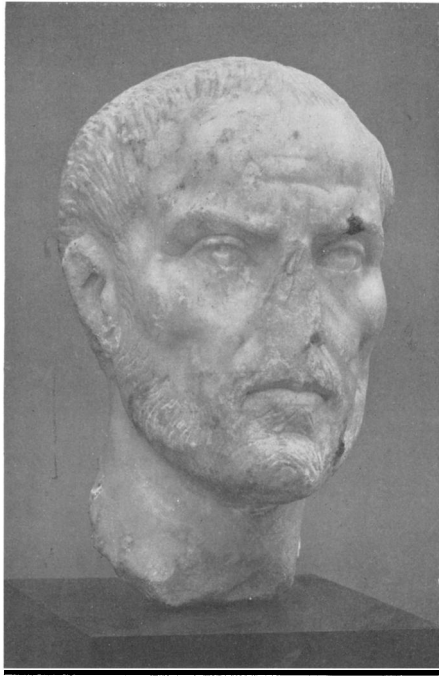


FIG. 8. ROMAN PORTRAIT

the Roman sculptors possessed. Of Roman execution also, though it reproduces a Greek type, is the life-size Head of a Youth (fig. 7), the nose of which is partly restored. In this head the style of Polykleitos, the great contemporary of Pheidias, will be readily recognized, and it is undoubtedly the fragment of a copy of one of his works, perhaps rather better than the average of the Roman copies on which we have to depend mainly for our knowledge of his art.

The two remaining marbles belong in this section only by reason of their material, as both are very small, and have really more association with terra-cotta statuettes, for which reason they are placed in the case of the terra-cottas in this temporary exhibition. One of these is a caricature of an old man,—a philosopher, as may be inferred from his long beard and mantle, and of the Epicurean school if his well-fed proportions and general air of contentment are trustworthy indications. The other is a Roman portrait of a man, of the third century A. D. (Fig. 8).

E. R.